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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims the claims as follows:

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A frame transfer method in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, said method comprising:

adding, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination, to make an expansion frame; and  
relaying by one or more nodes on said network, said data frame based on said forwarding information of said added expansion tag, to transfer the frame to said egress [[edge]] node, said one or more nodes node-relaying said data frame by using said expansion tag to determine an output port without conducting an MAC address search,

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

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2. (Currently Amended) A frame transfer method in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, said method comprising:

adding, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination and information about customers to which said source and said destination belong, to make an expansion frame; and

relaying by one or more nodes on said network, said data frame based on said forwarding information of said added expansion tag to transfer the frame to said egress

[[edge]] node,

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

3.-4. (Cancelled)

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5. (Currently Amended) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein, at [[an]] said ingress node of the source of said data frame on said network, said expansion tag is generated based on network information of said data frame and said generated expansion tag is added to make said expansion frame.

6. (Previously Presented) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein, at said egress node on said network, said expansion tag is deleted from said expansion frame to make said data frame and said data frame is transferred to said transfer destination.

7. (Previously Presented) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein said data frame comprises an Ethernet frame.

8. (Original) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 6, wherein a VLAN tag of said Ethernet frame is replaced by said expansion tag to make said expansion frame.

9. (Original) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 7, wherein said expansion tag is inserted immediately after a source MAC address of said Ethernet frame to make said expansion frame.

10. (Previously Presented) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 7, wherein, when said Ethernet frame fails to have said VLAN tag, said expansion tag is

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added between a source MAC address and Ethernet attribute information to make said expansion frame.

11. (Previously Presented) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein said forwarding information comprises identification information comprising identifier information of said egress node or label information for reaching said egress node.

12. (Previously Presented) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein said forwarding information comprises identification information comprising identifier information of said egress node or label information for reaching said egress node and additionally identifier information of said ingress node.

13.-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein a length of said expansion tag is 32 bits and a length of a storage region of said expansion tag is an integral multiple of 32 bits.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ingress node in said network further comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node

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~~correspond with each other, a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and a table which makes identification information of said ingress node and one or a plurality of output port information correspond with each other,~~

~~wherein [[a]] said core node in said network further comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said ingress node and one or a plurality of output port information correspond with each other, and~~

~~wherein said egress node further comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other, a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said ingress node and one or a plurality of output port information correspond with each other.~~

21. (Previously Presented) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 20, wherein identification information of said ingress node comprises an existing VLAN tag value or a group identifier obtained by grouping a part of existing VLAN tags or a group identifier obtained by grouping all the existing VLAN tags.

22. (Currently Amended) The frame transfer method in the network as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ingress node in said network further comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination, identification information of said egress node and customer information of said transfer destination correspond with each other and a table

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~~which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and~~

~~wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and~~

~~wherein said egress node further comprises a table which makes customer information of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.~~

23. - 48. (Cancelled)

49. (Currently Amended) A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising:

a frame processing element which adds, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination, to make an expansion frame; and

a switch element which receives said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag,

~~wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.~~

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wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and  
wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

50. (Currently Amended) A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising:

a frame processing element which adds, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding of an ingress node which has received said frame, to make an expansion frame, and when applied, said data frame [[is]] comprises a frame to be broadcast; and

a switch element which receives said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to at least one node on said network based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag.

wherein said ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of an egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

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wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

51. (Currently Amended) A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising:

a frame processing element which adds, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress ([edge]) node to said destination and customer information of said destination, to make an expansion frame; and

a switch element which receives said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag.

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

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52.-55. (Cancelled)

56. (Currently Amended) A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising:

a switch element which receives an expansion frame with an expansion tag including information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag.

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

57. (Currently Amended) A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising a switch element which receives an expansion frame with an expansion tag including forwarding information of an

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ingress [[edge]] node which has received said frame, to transfer the frame to a path to each node on said network based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag,

wherein said ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of an egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

58.-59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently Amended) A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising a switch element which receives an expansion frame with an expansion tag including information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination and customer information of said destination to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag,

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with

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each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,  
wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and  
wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

61.-64. (Cancelled)

65. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 49, wherein said frame processing element comprises:

    a frame attribute detector for extracting frame attribute information of said data frame to an input port of the node;  
    an expansion tag generator for generating said expansion tag based on said frame attribute information; and  
    a frame converter for adding said generated expansion tag to said data frame to convert the frame into an expansion frame.

66. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 65, wherein said expansion tag generator includes:

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a correspondence information table in which information about correspondence between frame attribute information generated by said frame attribute detector and network information is stored; and

an expansion tag generation unit for, after reading network information corresponding to said frame attribute information from said correspondence information table based on said frame attribute information, generating an expansion tag based on said network information.

67. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 65, wherein said frame converter, when a data frame applied to an input port of said node comprises an Ethernet frame, inserts said expansion tag after said destination MAC address.

68. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 65, wherein said frame converter comprises:

an expansion tag separation unit for, when said data frame comprises an Ethernet frame, separating said expansion tag from said expansion frame transferred from said frame switch; and

a frame check sequence calculation unit for recalculating a frame check sequence of said Ethernet frame transferred from the expansion tag separation unit to rewrite the frame check sequence.

69. (Original) The node as set forth in claim 49, further comprising an expansion tag deletion circuit for deleting said expansion tag included in said frame with an expansion tag to output the frame as a data frame.

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70. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 69, wherein said expansion tag deletion circuit comprises:

an expansion tag separation unit for separating said expansion tag from said expansion frame; and

an FCS calculation unit for recalculating a Frame Check Sequence (FCS) of said Ethernet frame transferred from the expansion tag separation unit to rewrite the FCS.

71. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 49, wherein said switch element comprises:

a frame forwarding unit for receiving an expansion frame transferred from said frame processing element to obtain output port information based on network information stored in an expansion tag in said expansion frame; and

a packet switch unit for receiving an expansion frame and said output port information transferred from said frame forwarding unit to output said frame with an expansion tag to a port as set forth in said output port information.

72. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 71, wherein said frame forwarding unit comprises:

an expansion tag information table indicative of correspondence between forwarding information in an expansion tag of said expansion frame received and output port information of said packet switch; and

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a forwarding path search unit for extracting forwarding information from an expansion tag of said expansion frame received and referring to said expansion tag information table to obtain output port information from the forwarding information.

73. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 72, wherein said forwarding information comprises identification information comprising identifier information of said egress node or label information for reaching said egress node.

74. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 72, wherein said forwarding information comprises identification information comprising identifier information of said egress node or label information for reaching said egress node and additionally identifier information of said ingress node.

75. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 72, wherein said forwarding information comprises identification information comprising identifier information of said ingress node.

76. (Currently Amended) The node as set forth in claim 72, A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising:

a frame processing element which adds, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress node to said destination, to make an expansion frame; and

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a switch element which receives said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag, wherein said ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein said switch element comprises:

a frame forwarding unit for receiving an expansion frame transferred from said frame processing element to obtain output port information based on network information stored in an expansion tag in said expansion frame; and

a packet switch unit for receiving an expansion frame and said output port information transferred from said frame forwarding unit to output said frame with an expansion tag to a port as set forth in said output port information,

wherein said frame forwarding unit comprises:

an expansion tag information table indicative of correspondence between forwarding information in an expansion tag of said expansion frame received and output port information of said packet switch; and

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a forwarding path search unit for extracting forwarding information from an expansion tag of said expansion frame received and referring to said expansion tag information table to obtain output port information from the forwarding information, and

wherein said forwarding information comprises identification information comprising identifier information of said egress node and identifier information of a domain in each hierarchy to which the node belongs or label information for reaching said egress node.

77. (Cancelled)

78. (Currently Amended) The node as set forth in claim 49, wherein said ingress node in said network further comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other, a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and a table which makes identification information of said ingress node and one or a plurality of output port information correspond with each other,

[[a]]wherein said core node in said network further comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said ingress node and one or a plurality of output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node further comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other, a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond

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~~with each other and a table which makes identification information of said ingress node and one or a plurality of output port information correspond with each other.~~

79. (Previously Presented) The node as set forth in claim 49, wherein identification information of said ingress node comprises an existing VLAN tag value or a group identifier obtained by grouping a part of existing VLAN tags or a group identifier obtained by grouping all the existing VLAN tags.

80. (Currently Amended) The node as set forth in claim 49, wherein said ingress node in said network ~~further~~ comprises a table which makes an said address of said transfer destination, identification information of said egress node and customer information of said transfer destination correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes customer information of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

81. (Currently Amended) The node as set forth in claim 49, A node in a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, comprising:

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a frame processing element which adds, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress node to said destination, to make an expansion frame; and

a switch element which receives said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag, wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein said ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination, identification information of said egress node and identification information of a domain in each hierarchy to which the node belongs correspond with each other, and a table which makes identification information of said egress node, identification information of a domain in each hierarchy to which the node belongs and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein [[a]] said core node in said network further comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node, identification information of a domain in each

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hierarchy to which the node belongs and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node further comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other, and a table which makes identification information of said egress node, identification information of a domain in each hierarchy to which the node belongs and output port information correspond with each other.

82. (Currently Amended) In a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, a computer readable medium storing a frame transfer program executed in a processor on a node in the network for controlling transfer of said data frame, said frame transfer program comprising the functions of:

adding, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination to make an expansion frame, and

receiving said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag,

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

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wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

83. (Cancelled)

84. (Currently Amended) In a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, a computer readable medium storing a frame transfer program executed in a processor comprising a node in the network for controlling transfer of said data frame, said frame transfer program comprising the functions of: adding, to said data frame, an expansion tag containing information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination and customer information of said destination to make an expansion frame, and

receiving said expansion frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag,

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

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wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

85.-88. (Cancelled)

89. (Currently Amended) In a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, a computer readable medium storing a frame transfer program executed in a processor comprising a node in the network for controlling transfer of said data frame, said frame transfer program comprising the function of: receiving an expansion frame with an expansion tag including information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination added to said data frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag.

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and  
wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes

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identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

90. (Currently Amended) In a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, a computer readable medium storing a frame transfer program executed in a processor comprising a node in the network for controlling transfer of said data frame, said frame transfer program comprising the function of:

receiving an expansion frame with an expansion tag including that includes forwarding information about being forwarded to [[of]] an ingress [[edge]] node, which comprises received said received expansion frame being added to said data frame to transfer the data frame to a path to each node on said network based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag,

wherein said ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of an egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

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91. and 92. (Cancelled)

93. (Currently Amended) In a network for transferring a data frame sent from a source on the network to a predetermined destination, a computer readable medium storing a frame

transfer program executed in a processor comprising a node in the network for controlling transfer of said data frame, said frame transfer program comprising the function of:

receiving an expansion frame with an expansion tag including information about forwarding to an egress [[edge]] node to said destination and customer information of said destination added to said data frame to transfer the frame to a path to said egress node based on said forwarding information of said expansion tag.

wherein an ingress node in said network comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and identification information of said egress node correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other,

wherein a core node in said network comprises a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other, and

wherein said egress node comprises a table which makes an address of said transfer destination and output port information correspond with each other and a table which makes identification information of said egress node and output port information correspond with each other.

94.-109. (Cancelled)